

[Show Business]

Story about John L. Sullivan is all right. None of the ? others is any good - all too incnsequential. [??] A couple of the attached poems are all right. Can we print [??] signed stuff? 11/10

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview [350?]

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Wayne Walden

ADDRESS 51 Bank St. Manhattan

DATE September 20, Nov 10

SUBJECT SHOW BUSINESS — AND SELECTIONS FROM AN OLD SCRAPBOOK

1. Date and time of interview Evening of Sep.19 and 20th.
2. Place of Interview Home of informant.
3. Name and address of informant Mrs. Erma Hayes, 332 West 19th Street, N.Y.City.
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.

None

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5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you No one

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc. Small two or three-room apartment, situated in basement of building, but neat and comfortable. The informant, formerly Miss Erma Gilson, is a lady/ admitting sixty years of age, tall, well preserved and apparently a natural blond. She, beginning about ?] 1900, has for years been associated with vaudeville and a performer in several-companies such still remembered plays as Vanity Fair, The cracker-jacks, etc. Mrs. Erma Hayes is American, born in [N.Y.?] understand, of American percentage, she is over 60 years old

[C?]

W. Walden.

51 Bank St. Man. Informant, Mrs. Erma Hayes, 332 West 19 Street, N.Y. City

*1

"I dont suppose," said Erma Hayes, once known to vaudeville as Erma Gilson," I dont suppose that my experience while following vaudeville was much different than what the ordinary girl might have. Generally, whenever we played in a town, there was some fresh geeser on the lookout to pick us up. Now and then they came in handy, particularly when you might land in some town with no money and a delayed payday. At such times these guys might turn out as angels. A girl learns soon enough how to get along with them.

[Erma Does Some Fighting *1]

We couldn't have held a job unless we had looks. I was rated as, being good looking-maybe not a dazzling beauty-but I was a young and giggling girl at the time and also had my encounters with mashers. I remember once, when we were playing a burlesque in a

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little town in Florida-Mulberry, I think it was-a town reported to have 3000 men and 300 women-we were told by the manager to leave the theatre in a body, as singly we might be annoyed. Well, sure enough, it so happened that as some of us were walking down the street, a young rather tough-looking Smart Alick, practically a school-kid, grabs a hold of me and in a harsh voice says , 'Come on with me'. I turned and told the kid to beat it. With that he pulled a gun, a 38 revolver, from his pocket and threatened to shoot if I didn't go with him. Well sir, I dont know what came over me, maybe the Irish in me, but I lit into that guy and gave him the worst beating he probably ever had. At the same time I was calling him a dirty little coward and every thing that he didn't like to hear. I had to be pulled off, or I might have killed him I was so mad. Anyhow I then walked to the hotel we were staying in, and all the way the rest of the girls were telling me how brave I was. But, and here's the funny part of the story, as soon as we got into the [?] hotel I fainted clear away. x x x

2

Walden (Related by Irma Gilson, former vaudeville actress)

*2 “ Another time, when we were playing in Lapoort Laport Illinois, or is Laport in Indiana ? -anyway it wasn't far out of Chicago-it was another of those college towns, another girl and I were leaving the theatre when up steps a fresh college [?] Guy and started in to bother us. Finally, when we didn't pay much attention to him, he [?] grabs hold of the girl with me and started to drag her along. That proved just too bad for him for she was a dancer on the stage and a high kicker. The first thing that fellow knew he got a good swift kick right on the chin. He then beat it out of there in a hurry. As it happened we came through that town about ten days later and learned that the poor guy was in the hospital with the end of his tounge tongue bitten off. “ x x [The Dancer Kicks a Fresh man *2]

Thinking that this was perhaps enough of virtue pursued by villans villains , I essayed to shift the subject to a more humorous turn.

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*3 # [????], maybe Maybe this will strike you as funny. We had Old John L. Sullivan once, and his stunt was to do some shadow-boxing during the oleo. We girls were forced to wear not only the woolen tights, but a pair of silk tights over them. A moral wave must have struck that town about the time we did. Anyway the first thing we knew was that signs were being posted up where we had to see them, that neither such words as 'damn' nor 'hell' would be tolerated. In addition to that no jokes of double meaning would be allowed, but worst of all, especially for old John, the sign also forbid sparring or shadow-boxing. It seems , too, that the Mayor had said something not caring to see the antics of a 'has-been. 'Anyhow old John came out, when he was to give his little talk, and says—"Ladies an' Gentlemen Gentlemen, I can't tell you what I'd like to say 'cause there's some signs around here that won't let me use ' damn ' or ' hell ' . course Course I don't give a damn if someone thinks I'm a 'has-been', but I can say it's a damned sight more to be a has-been than to be a never-was". That might not have been the exact way he [??? makes a 'spiel' *3]

3

Walden [????] exact way he put it, he got away with 'damn' at least three times in his short [?] spiel." x x x

*4

[She Won The Bet. *4] I think it was the year 1905, here in New York, that our burlesque wheel split up into two circuits, an Eastern and a Western one. Some of us were feeling rather bad about being forced to break up. You remember the Miners-well Eddie Miner says to me, ' cheer Cheer up , in another year we will be one wheel again. 'I said, ' no No dont think it will ever be.' 'I'll make a bet with you.' he says, Ill I'll bet you a long pair of white kid-gloves.' 'You're on', I said, I'll bet you a box of cigars.' Sure enough, when we met just a year later, the first thing he said was, 'Well here are your long white kid-gloves.' And believe me they were beauties. " x x x

*5

[[?] Romance Enters This Round *5] “ There was once, I think it was about 1902, that a-lull being on, we were sent south to play New Orleans. In Cincinnati we were delayed so that we didn't get to New Orleans until late on a Saturday night. The hotel we struck about charged us every thing we had for a room, so that we were just about broke for fair. After we got the rooms, a number of us went down to a restaurant, and in this restaurant we were of course talking among ourselves about the high prices and so forth, I guess we were talking rather loud, as a bunch of girls naturally would in such a case. Well there were some fellows sitting over at another table, and they, of course, were listening in. Pretty soon a tall, striking, very dark Frenchman comes over and very politely says-'Excuse me, but I think that I can be of assistance in getting you girls placed-if you'll wait a minute I'll be right back'. He did come back in a few minutes. He got us a place with a friend of his, a woman who kept a boarding house right around on another street. Six of us put up there, and hardly had to

4

Walden [???

pay anything. He had fixed it so that we didn't, but that the charge should be made to himself. I got to know him quite well while we were there. He certainly treated me swell. His name was Michele Monier. When at last we left New Orleans, he and I were standing on the street talking. I told him that a friend of mine, by the name of Della Faytell,- I believe she was in the 'Crackerjack'at the time, that her show would be coming soon , so he instructed me to have her look him up. And , of course, I wrote and told Della all about him and to be sure to look him up when she got there. Later on I got a letter from Della saying what a nice fellow he was and everything, ' but' she says, 'your discription of him was all wrong. He isn't tall, dark and handsome, but short, light complectioned, and not too good looking. And his name, too, you were wrong on-his name is not Michele Monier, but Dick Evans!' I'd given up trying to figure out the tangle of it-it didn't seem to make sense

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at all-but quite a long while after I again got down there and then I met Della and also her Dick Evans. The way it turned out was that this Dick Evans was standing near where Monier and I were talking that time and he overheard what I said about Della coming down. He heard the whole story and got it down pat. So, when Della did arrive, who was there waiting but this Dick Evans. He, of course, introduced himself as Monier, and asked if she was Della Faytell. "Why yes", she says, 'it was my friend Erma Gilson who told you about me wasn't it? He said 'Yes I'm the fellow' and took her in charge right away. Imagine the crust, would you. Well they got married and the last time I heard from them they were hitting it along quite well. Gosh, to think of it, that was over thirty years ago. " x x x

[W. Walden ?] Sep. 29, 1938 Informant, Mrs. Erma Hayes, 332 West 19th Street, N.Y. City
[?] [910?]

The second visit at the home of Mrs. Hayes, former vaudeville actor, enabled me to procure this poem which according to Erma Hayes has never been published. The story concerning the poem would seem to be that it was written by a professor's wife, anonymously, to satirize the prudery of one who in authority [???] had ordered removal of certain parts of three statues presented to a Tennessee college.

The Sculptor From Tennessee.

1 Oh say, my friend, have you ever heard, The tale that is told in Weatherford Of a deed that was done in the Art Musee By a modern sculptor from Tennessee? There are other tales that are somewhat gory, And celebrated in song and story, But the three blind mice and the farmer's wife Who out off their tails with a carving knife Could not compare with the statues three Who met with the selfsame cruelty. [????????]

-2- This modern sculptor was fresh and green, And evidently had never seen, Since he left the scenes of his native heather A statue posed in the altogether. So he called for chisel, hammer and tong, To handle the thing that didn't belong In the realm of Art; and with one

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swift blow He removed the cause of old Adam's woe, And left the poor statue standing there The picture of impotent wild despair.

(Walden)

Page Two The Sculptor From tennessee

-3- That night as he slept in his trundle bed The spooks came floating around his head, They pointed their fingers at him in scorn, And made him wish he'd never been born. The doctors shrieked, "You measley skate, Who gave you license to amputate?" And the sculptors screamed "You infernal quack You better get busy and put them back."

-4- "For if you don't we'll cut-(ahem) We'll do unto you as you did to them." And flourished their knives with fiendish glee While the old man begged on bended knee. "This world" he said, "will go straight to perdition, Unless I can issue a second edition." At that his inquisitors formed a ring,

(This ?????? [?????] They rode him around from Beersheba Dan, Till he woke a sadder and wiser man.

-5- That day the illustrious president Bought him a bottle of strong cement, And returned to the school with the single thought To repair the damage that he had wrought. But there's many a slip twixt the cup and the lip, And the boys hadn't left him a single chip. Those innocent cherubs of tender years Had carried them off for souvenirs.

(Walden)

(Page Threee) The Sculptor From Tennessee

-6- There was naught remaining for him to do, But to manufacture a thing or two. So he worked and chiseled with might and main Till his mind gave way from the terrible strain, For the only model he had, alas, Was the one that he saw in the looking glass. Imagine the

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stalwart Hercules With pigmy attachment, if you please, And I think you'll then be prepared to say, "No wonder the old man's mind gave way."

-7- Now the modern sculptor is running rife, With pincers, saw and carving knife, And, if you linger outside the gate You'll be a eunuch as sure as fate. He never stops for bone or gristle But whittles them off as slick as a whistle, For he-hopes to find when he looks them o'er An appendage to fit on the Discus Thrower, A match for Apollo (Belvedere) And another for Hercules, too, I hear.

-8- But you never can find in a little town, A very good fit in a "hand-me-down". Good models seem scarce in these later days Forsooth average men look more like jays. And that is the reason I apprehend That no one can tell where this trouble will end. The moral to this isn't hard to find,

Walden)

Page four. The Sculptor From Tennessee *8- continued The nastiness all is in your mind. So please, if for something you have knack, Dont take things off you cant put back.

As a sample of curious word formations:

Ohwata nas Siam Oh what an ass I amn am

Geewata nas Siam Gee what an ass I am

Osucha nas O such an ass.

Sucha tamass Siam Such a damn ass I amn am

Ino can gif atam I no can give a damn

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Osucha nas Siam Oh such an ass I am

Osucha nas. O such an ass. (From an old labor song book.) ***** x x x 210 210
[?] [?] 3560

5

W. Walden

51 Bank St. Man. Informant, Mrs. Erma Hayes, 332 West 19 street, N.Y. City Subject-
selection from a Scrap Book. [md;]

The poems presented here are selections from an old scrap-book of Mrs. Hayes, in which, affectionately pasted by the former actress, is a miscellania of subjects diverse enough to serve the Walrus with "Things to talk about". Indeed, the scrap books contents contents of the scrap books range from cooking recipes to divorce notices, from vaudeville itinirary itineraries to obituary items, but among these peoms poems [?] of the scrap book an old forgotten friend may appear. (Number One) Here, of Of lighter vein, once recited by many who were, or wished to be "the life of the party, is "Kelly's Dream." By J.W. Kekly Kelly . 1

————— (Move) Here two Two poems of cats, one of a Persian, the other a Pole, have often roused the risibilities and made gay a party that otherwise would have been dull: "The Wedding of the Persian Cat"; 2

"Hunting the Wily Pole Cat" (-As told by a French-Canadian).

[(Name of Author unknown)?] 3

————— (?) Familiar to allm all no doubt, are the these
"popular recitations."

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"Toledo Slim", "The Face On The Bar Room Floor - " neither of which here names the author; and "The Shooting Of Dan McGrew", by R.W.Service. 4 5 6

Nov 4) [?], "The Legend Of The Loganberry" (From The Seamy Side of Vegetable Life) by Morris Bishop, typewritten in the scrap book, may or may not have been published. 7

[?] Attesting an appreciation of Eddie Guest are these verses in a "Just Folk" series: "Smile", "The Purpose", "How Do You Buy Your Money", "Uncle Sam", "He Was A Decent Guy", "The Blame", "If I Could Live It Over", "Let Er Go Gallegher", "The Golfer's Wish", "An American Talks", "Do The Best You Can", "Woman", "Our Country", and may be a few others that we didn't happen to see 8 - [20?]

[?] That by no means exhausts the stuff of lighter vein; there yet remains

6

W. Walden Selections From A Scrap Book- (Continued)

a variety of poems or, if you prefer, "pomes", penned-by-persons-persumably clipped from papers in every section of the land, and over many years. There is for instance: "The Ornery Cuss" signed "G.R.Y.- No Parking Here", "unsigned) -" The death of King Jazz " by Tisdle Mairs in Detroit Free Press. - "The Landlubber's Chanty" by Maoriland" -" The Good Old Days" by S. Gillilan in Farm Life. - "The Love Of Riley" to J.W. Riley) by W.L. Larned - "The Vampire" by Kipling. - "The Auto Fire Engine" typed by the author, J.W. Foley, and presented to the scrap books compiler." - # That Heathen Chineese", by Bret Harte - "Safety Last" a series of four and five lined rhymes dedicated to the dead motorist whose life was lost, alas, for a number of no good reasons. If you are old enough to remember, you may enjoy "The Woodpile Near The Door"-enjoy reading it, that is, more than you did cutting

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the darned stuff. This ought to give you a notion of the amount of loving labor that went to merely the gayer side of the scrap book. ven Berton Fraley is included. [?]

More somber and some lyrical are ;“When Twilight Comes” from “xchange” - The Deserted Song Sparrows Nest” and “Jack London”, these two by Arch Bristow of Garland Pa. typed and presented by him to Mrs. Hayes who believes the poems were never published. # There is “The “Light f Asia” by Sir Cowin Arnold, and “The Woodman” by Robert L. Stevenson, two poems of which a once prominent critic wrote—“So far as I know these two selections are unequaled in all literature as graphic descriptions of the murderous nature of the struggle for existance-Arnold for animals, Stevenson for plants.” There is a poem to “The Brute” by Wm. V. Moody, and to “Eugene V Debs” by Douglas When of the International Song Publisher (? defunct),” Land of Beginning Again” by L.F. Tarkinston, and “Tired Mothers” by “Mary R. Smith [?] [?] are moving. “Labor” by Edwin Markham is indubitably poetry and, last and not least let us mention [???] Ella Wheeler Wilcox, whose “The Unwed Mother To The Wife” is a poem of ringing defiance.